

A PLACE FOR WOMEN:
NEGOTIATING ANNA HUME'S *TRIUMPHS*
AND WOMEN'S EXPERIENCES IN REFORMED SCOTLAND

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ABSTRACT

In a seminal 2004 article, Sarah M. Dunnigan explored the “dutiful and dissenting” desires of the seventeenth-century Scottish author Anna Hume (120). The materials for Hume’s biography are slim; apart from her long efforts editing and advocating for her deceased father David Hume of Godscroft’s history of the noble Douglas family, she is best known for her translation. Dunnigan proposes that “Hume’s desire to translate *I Trionfi* in the first half of the seventeenth century may have been fostered by the intellectual and cultural conditions of contemporary women’s writing” (122). This suggestion merits further research and demonstration. By connecting Dunnigan’s notion of *fostering* to the cultural conditions of early seventeenth-century Scotland at the time of publication, this paper offers the contention that Hume’s translation of the *Trionfi* can be read through a wider lens; that is, as the creation of a wholly female, Scottish literary space in which readers are able to witness, engage with, and attempt to understand the complexities and incongruencies of early modern Scottish women’s lived experiences.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

PERMISSION TO USE	i
ABSTRACT	ii
ACKONWLEDGEMENTS	iii
TABLE OF CONTENTS	iv
A PLACE FOR WOMEN: NEGOTIATING ANNA HUME'S <i>TRIUMPHS</i> AND WOMEN'S EXPERIENCES IN REFORMED SCOTLAND.....	1
WORKS CITED.....	18

Historical Context

In a seminal 2004 article, Sarah M. Dunnigan explored the “dutiful and dissenting” desires of the seventeenth-century Scottish author Anna Hume (“Daughterly,” 120). The materials for Hume’s biography are slim; apart from her long efforts editing and advocating for her deceased father David Hume of Godscroft’s history of the noble Douglas family, she is best known for her translation, published in 1644, of Petrarch’s first three *Triumphs*, of Love, Chastity, and Death (Dunnigan, “Hume”). Dunnigan proposes that “Hume’s desire to translate *I Trionfi* in the first half of the seventeenth century may have been fostered by the intellectual and cultural conditions of contemporary women’s writing” (122). This suggestion merits further research and demonstration. By connecting Dunnigan’s notion of *fostering* to the cultural conditions of early seventeenth-century Scotland at the time of publication, the present study offers the contention that Hume’s translation of the *Trionfi* can be read through a wider lens; that is, as the creation of a wholly female, Scottish literary space in which readers are able to witness, engage with, and attempt to understand the complexities and incongruencies of early modern Scottish women’s lived experiences.

Support for this contention can be found in examining the social and political environment of Scotland in the years prior to Hume’s translation and publication of the *Triumphs*. In the sixteenth century, the country undertook the process to break with the Papacy, and in 1560 the Scottish Reformation Parliament officially adopted a Calvinist national Kirk. The Reformation brought considerable change to all aspects of life for the people of Scotland; in an important study, Margo Todd has argued that it “required a profound reorientation of understanding and expression” (1). Anxieties and fears that had been appeased by “holy water or appeals to saints” were now reliant on religious catechism and the word, which was “preached, read, repeated, [and] hopefully understood” (Todd 2, 3). Alongside this, the Kirk took an active, interventive, multifarious role in the lives of the Scottish people. Parishes administered poor relief and education; regulated marriage, baptism and burial; administered parochial finances and supervised the physical maintenance, decorations and expansion of the kirk and kirkyard; oversaw catechism and examination; declared fasts and feasts; ordered and administered communion; represented the parish in calling and assessing ministers; and served as liaisons with higher church bodies—presbyteries, synods and, at the national level, the General Assembly (Todd 11).

All areas of life became inextricably tied to the Kirk—including, as mentioned above, education. The Calvinist reliance on the word meant that the capability for the Scottish people to read the scriptures was of utmost importance. A 1616 Privy Council act highlighted

that the Kirk were determined to create schools in every parish, and that the access to that education was meant for both sexes (Marshall 125). The Kirk intended for everyone to be capable of reading the scriptures which, along with being able to “take notes on sermons, sing from the new vernacular psalter and clearly articulate protestant orthodoxy[,] became the new status-markers of the godliest” (Todd 24). While there is still some debate about the literacy and education of girls, post-Reformation Scotland saw the encouragement, and even the expectation, of—at the very least—a semi-literate female populace.

Along with being encouraged to reach some level of literacy in post-Reformation-era Scotland, women were also—for the first time—considered “fully responsible for their own souls,” with preachers explicitly referring to both sexes when they gave sermons (Larner 101). However, despite this consideration of women as “independent moral individuals by the Church [and] to a much lesser degree by the courts,” the Calvinist religion was highly patriarchal and “[t]he ritual and moral inferiority of women was preached along with their new personal responsibility” (Mitchison 86; Larner 101). Under the Reformation, Scotland entered a “crusade for ‘godly discipline’”; and with it came the conviction that women in particular were “at risk of becoming either victims or agents of immorality, with an emphasis on the latter” (DesBrisay 137, 139). Considering this, it does not, as Rosalind Mitchison argues, “seem to be a complete accident that it is in the early post-Reformation period that we see the criminalization of women ... and the beginnings of the witchcraft craze. All meant a new look at the role of women” (87–88).

The criminal woman in post-Reformation Scotland was one who was deemed “disruptive and rebellious” (Knox 13). These tendencies were understood through biological notions that women were inherently weaker and disposed to temptation, and the Kirk sought to contain and control this perceived intrinsic unruliness (Knox 20). The witch-hunts in particular became sites where the unruliness of women was contested and contained. The Scottish witch-hunts were voracious, with five periods of intense prosecution occurring between 1590 and 1662 (Larner 60). Christina Larner argued memorably that “[w]itchcraft as a choice was only possible for women who had free will and personal responsibility attributed to them [t]he pursuit of witches could therefore be seen as a rearguard action against the emergence of women as independent adults,” even though that push for independence was initiated by the Kirk (101–02). The witch-hunt had many attributing factors, but scholars tend to agree that at its core, the hunt “was directly related to the necessity of enforcing moral and theological conformity” (Larner 102). Considering this alongside the changing spiritual and social roles and experiences of Scottish women perhaps

explains why the female population made up roughly eighty-five percent of all those accused (Goodare 289). The women who were accused were often those who had, in some way, “challenged the patriarchal view of the ideal woman” that post-Reformation Scotland—particularly the Kirk—had begun to build (Larner 102). The witch-hunt, then, became a way to contain and condemn those women who “[did] not fulfill the male view of how women ought to conduct themselves” (Larner 100).

How, then, would post-Reformation women have obtained the status of the patriarchal ‘ideal woman’? This question leads back, at least at first, to a closer consideration of women’s education in the post-Reformation era. Though the Kirk desired a literate populace, the education of Scottish women was otherwise focused on learning to be “chaste, silent, and obedient,” alongside procuring “textile and other housekeeping skills” (King 166). It was historically believed that while “different passions [drove] men to commit different crimes,” for women every temptation and sin came “from a common cause—lack of chastity” (Gibson 2). As such, while a woman’s “principal function ... was to reproduce, her principal role to mother, and her principal sin to lust, her supreme virtue was chastity, and especially a state of virginity” (King 93). Of course, this emphasis on chasteness was not new to the period, but by connecting the concept to the knowledge that a woman was now considered in charge of her own morality and soul, the safeguarding of her chastity became a woman’s personal responsibility. By preserving her chasteness, a woman could—conceivably—be “freed from the negative image of seductress” to which she was otherwise deemed to be naturally inclined (King 93).

The *Querelle des Femmes*

Though the focus on chastity, silence, and obedience was strengthened in post-Reformation Scotland, the concept of it had, as mentioned, always existed. The single-minded focus on women’s purity had historically “left women who were in any way ‘public’ or autonomous open to charges of unchastity” (Gibson 2). Among other things, this accusation of being unchaste directly related to women who followed intellectual pursuits. This was true in a broader European sense, as well. From Antiquity, the belief that a woman could not be both chaste and intellectual was frequently argued, and resulted in “many proscriptions against women studying dialectic or rhetoric” (Gibson 2). The ability of a woman to learn and participate in these higher intellectual discourses was not only contested but commonly denied. Women could not, it seems, be both chaste and intellectual—at least not according to men—and as such they could not be permitted to partake in rhetoric without

risking relinquishing their chastity altogether. This accusation served as an important stimulus for the debate that began in the early fifteenth century that became known as the *querelle des femmes*. As Joan Kelly demonstrated in the foundational modern study of the phenomenon, the *querelle* originated as a response to Jean de Meun's lengthy "hostile addition to the thirteenth-century *Roman de la Rose*," and swiftly developed into a literary space in which learned women such as Christine de Pisan "launched a debate fought out in several languages, over at least three centuries, and in a plenitude of books" (King 187). To counter the misogynist assumptions typified by Jean de Meun, feminist protagonists in the *querelle* upheld "the virtues of women—their chastity, constancy, and labors, all of which were being deprecated":

But chiefly, they were concerned with two aspects of women's behavior under special attack. The contempt for women that marked early modern misogyny [and the consideration of] women as rationally defective. They could not govern, nor could they be learned—which is exactly why the early feminists used history mainly to find precedents for women's governance (and hence their right to self-rule) and for their learning (of which they felt newly and unjustly deprived). Arms and letters, *ars et mars*: Women were shut out of the twofold work of culture and civilization (as upper-class society conceived it) and were told their 'nature' would not allow it (Kelly 20–21).

At the core of their advocacy, the women participating in the *querelle* held that a woman could be both chaste—and therefore an 'acceptable' woman—and intellectual, and could thus participate in rational rhetoric and discourse.

Most *querelle* texts were written by educated women of "higher ranks, or, more often, by the female members of a distinctly modern, literate class that served the upper reaches of a ranked society" (Kelly 7). This made the majority of them the "sisters, daughters, and nieces of humanist teachers" who had effectively been educated by men to enter a society that those same men—in general—"forbade all women to enter" (Kelly 8). In this regard, it is worth recalling that Anna Hume's advocacy for and even participation in her father's historical writings gained traction long after David Hume's death in 1629. Even so, the *querelle* was not, as today's society might conceive of it, a political movement. Instead, it involved "a battle of pens" that highlighted how education was used against and withheld from women in order to subjugate them (Kelly 28). As this idea strengthened and it became more common to consider that "women, as women, were devoid of power and authority by their very nature," the women writing within the *querelle des femmes* began to create a "countervailing image of

historic female power” (Kelly 23, 28). This incorporated “Amazonian figures and tales of matriarchy, along with biographies of actual women warriors and rulers” which were used to “keep alive a fading image of independent women and of women as makers of culture and civilization” (Kelly 23).

Alongside the veneration of these physically strong and proficient ruling women of the past, proto-feminists of the *querelle des femmes* also focused on supporting the “powers of a woman’s mind” (Kelly 28). They did this both “directly, by their writings, and by commemorating the achievements of women of learning *as well* as women rulers” (Kelly 28, emphasis mine). As the tradition of the *querelle* grew, the “vision of female secession”—that is, the “creation of a space for womankind apart from the world of men”—became a recurrent and predominant theme within women’s *querelle* writing (King 228). This vision can be argued to have informed Anna Hume’s translation of Petrarch’s *Trionfi* and especially her trenchant, witty commentary appended to each canto of the translation proper.

As late as the mid-seventeenth century, the *querelle* would have been hard to ignore as a leading literary topic. *Querelle des femmes* passages, digressions, and episodes “appeared in virtually all kinds of narrative, in epic poetry and prose fiction as well as in political and philosophical writing,” not least within works translated by women (Jordan 308). This point deserves particular attention, given the well-established (and persistent) critical tendency to assume that translation is a subordinate literary activity. Particularly when undertaken by female authors, translation has had a contended, unstable place in early modern European scholarship. It has been historically relegated as a “secondary form of literary production” that “one should study to complement or compensate for the scarcity of female-authored texts belonging to more traditionally accepted, and therefore more easily recognized, modes of writing” (Belle 7–8). Danielle Clarke acknowledges that the assumption that translation functions as a form of control that demands no exercise of agency on the part of the practitioner has been a constant in understandings of translation from the Renaissance to the present. Translation’s meanings have been unduly constricted, as interpretations have concentrated wholeheartedly on value-judgements based upon the fluency and accuracy of the translation as defined in relation to the original, rather than attempting to read translations as textual interventions in their own right (Clarke 282).

As such, though translation and imitation were “the dominant modes of production pertaining to early modern women’s authorship,” it was possible to read those translations as simply “processes that produce slavish copying and primitive ventriloquism, translation and imitation” (Clarke 282). This often created a “dead-end of interpretation, where texts written

and published by early modern women do little more than reproduce patriarchal structures and rehearse the erasure of their own voices” (Clarke 283). Danielle Clarke notes that translation could be “perceived to be slavish and lacking in autonomy”—she notes Nicholas Breton’s comment (1605) “if she be learned and studious, perswade her to translation, it will keepe her from Idlenes”; however, she suggests that within women’s work of translation, one can often “find an engagement with ideas and positions that go beyond the ideologies assumed to be acceptable for women” (282).

In reaction, as Marie-Alice Belle acknowledges, there has been a “double call for an increased recognition of the role of women and of translation within Western literary and cultural histories” in the last several decades (Belle 5). Historians “understanding of the significance of female-authored translations has thus evolved, and they are now able to “identif[y] translation as a distinct and essential practice in the making of the female writer” (Belle 5). As such, “[t]he centrality of translation in the early modern corpus of women’s writings has accordingly been reflected in recent gender-oriented literary histories” (Belle 5). This evolution in scholarship has resulted in an understanding that women’s translations were able to “reach well beyond the domestic sphere to participate in religious, political, and literary debates of the times” (Belle 9). Female-authored translations have thus begun to “[emerge] as a privileged ground of investigation, offering insight into issues as important and varied as early modern perceptions of women, their access to humanist learning and education, and the fashioning of their identities as social, literary, and cultural agents in early modern Europe” (Belle 16). It becomes clear, then, that female-authored translation could—and did—participate in the *querelle des femmes* tradition of early modern Europe. As Belle states, “the metaphors and commonplaces on translation equally used by early modern men and women shows that the very topoi of translation discourse could constitute a powerful way for women to appropriate a male-dominated genre and activity” and use that to create an “indirect assertion of authorship” (Belle 11).

Translating Petrarch’s *I Trionfi*

Francesco Petrarca (Petrarch) was an Italian poet and scholar whose reputation and influence extended well beyond his lifetime and nation. He lived through most of the fourteenth century—the first century of the Italian Renaissance—and wrote in both Italian and Latin. His works, particularly the *Trionfi* and the *Canzoniere*—which were both written in the vernacular Italian—were enormously popular and were “circulated widely in manuscript form before they were first printed in 1470 by Vindelinius de Spiro” (Hannay 257). These

works retained their popularity; “between 1470 and 1500 there were nine printed editions of the *Trionfi* alone and twenty-five combined editions,” including scholarly editions (Hannay 257). That number only continued to grow, so that between the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries there are “at least [eighty-five] extant ... manuscripts of Petrarch’s *Trionfi* alone, with another seventy-nine that combine the *Trionfi* with the *Canzoniere*” (Hannay 257). This torrent of publication ensured that “any person who claimed to have any knowledge of literature knew Laura, the chaste mistress, and Petrarch, the melancholic lover” (Coogan 307). Petrarch’s work—particularly the *Trionfi*—was not only dispersed through text and translation, but was also portrayed in “paintings, drawings, tapestries, miniatures, frescos, medals, *deschi da parto* or birth trays, *cassoni* or marriage chests, illustrated psalters, glass cups, majolica dishes, and statues,” so that “even those who were unlearned knew the story” (Hannay 258–59, 258).

In Scotland, Petrarch’s works were circulating by the early sixteenth century, though R.D.S Jack argues that they were likely being read earlier (4–5). In Scotland, the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries saw the *Trionfi* continue to grow in popularity and importance, in both textual and visual formats. Jack provides two courtly examples of this: textually, “Mary, Queen of Scots, had possessed a copy in her library”; and visually,

[a]t the Holyrood Shrovetide masque of 1564 each course was accompanied by a piece of dumb-show representing different moments in the *Trionfi*. During the first course, a blindfolded boy impersonated Cupid; at the second, a maiden represented chastity, while one of [the foremost Scottish humanist] George Buchanan’s poems was read aloud; finally, a child took the part of Time, while Buchanan in verse prophesied a lasting alliance between Mary and Elizabeth I. (77–78).

By the time James VI came of age and assumed direct rule (1580), the *Trionfi* was “regarded as the most widely known Italian text in Scotland, so that a translation of it would be a meaningful contribution to James’s vernacular revolution” (Jack 78).

The Scottish author who first undertook the translation of the *Trionfi* was William Fowler, secretary to Queen Anne. Fowler acknowledged that he wished, foremost, to translate Petrarch’s *Trionfi* because the translations he had thus far read, in both English and French, had “magled, and in everie member miserablie maimed and dismembered” Petrarch’s original verse (Jack 77). Jack suggests that Fowler may have been disparaging various translations, including “Henry Morley’s English version of about 1560, and three French translations by Georges de la Forge (1514), Le Baron d’Opède (1538) and Vasquin Phileul (1555)” (77). Jack also acknowledges, however, that Fowler may have considered Le Forge’s work at least

minimally during his own translation of the text, though the majority of the translation would have come from Fowler “work[ing] directly from the original” in order to “outdo all earlier attempts” (77).

The five translators of the *Trionfi* mentioned above were, perhaps obviously, all male. Furthermore, as Virginia Cox states, the works of Petrarch “conventionally posited a male speaking subject and a female object of desire”—Laura—who was usually presented as a “fetishized textual body par excellence” and who was, in many ways, “fragmented, reified, ‘scattered’” (Cox 583). It might seem, then, that Petrarch’s works would have alienated women, particularly ambitious authors and poets. Instead, there is considerable “evidence of a widespread knowledge of the text amongst women,” with the suggestion that the *Trionfi* perhaps “provided a useful model for the representation of dominant, powerful women, emphasizing simultaneously their virtue and their erotic power” (Clarke 283–284). It has also been acknowledged by Nona Feinberg that Petrarch’s text provided “an invitation to female poetics” (qtd. In Clarke 283). Proof is not lacking for this observation: translations of his *Trionfi* were also undertaken by Elizabeth I, Mary Sidney, and, most importantly for this research, Anna Hume. Petrarch—and Laura in particular—evidently appealed to prominent women aspiring to female authorship.

Anna Hume in Covenanted Scotland

Anna Hume’s translation of the first three of Petrarch’s *Trionfi* was published in 1644, the same year that she published her late father’s *The History of the Houses of Douglas and Angus* (Dunnigan 120). It cannot be overlooked that Hume chose to publish both of these texts during a period of incredible upheaval and uncertainty for Scotland. After the death of James VI in 1625, his son Charles I immediately alienated the people of Scotland with the 1625 Act of Revocation, where “a fair deal struck between the landowners and the crown now became a shattering destruction of the security of the landed classes, plunged into the nightmare of uncertainty about their titles to their property” (Wormald 133). Following this, Charles pushed for an Anglicization of the Kirk. However, his “heavy-handed interference was combined with [a] visible and insulting indifference,” which created uncertainty and unrest amongst the Scottish people (Wormald 133). The situation came to a tipping point on July 23, 1637, “when the new prayer book, issued by royal proclamation ... was ordered to be read in Edinburgh” (Wormald 134). Popular history declares that a woman named Jenny Geddes threw her stool at the minister of St. Giles Cathedral in protest of the inaugural use of the book. Though it is unknown if Jenny Geddes actually threw the first stool—or indeed if

she even existed—it was on that date that a riot broke out which resulted in the collapse of Charles’s Scottish government (Wormald 134).

On February 28, 1638, the National Covenant was signed. This Covenant, among other things, “demanded that a ‘general band’ be made and subscribed by all Charles’s subjects, for defence of the true religion and maintenance of the king’s majesty” (Wormald 136). Communication between Charles and Scotland continued to break down until 1639, when he “used his position as king of England to bring an English army against his Scottish subjects” (Wormald 137). Charles lost, and in 1640 the Covenant was implemented by Scottish Parliament. However, years of political turmoil were still to come. There was a period of initial success for those supporting the Covenant, but by 1644—Anna Hume’s publication year—civil war had broken out between Royalists and Covenanters (Wormald 137).

Hume’s personal position is unknown; however, her family did have strong connections to the Royal family. Her father, however, had also published *De unione insulae Britannicae* in the early seventeenth-century, which “argued that the way to preserve Scottish civic society and the rights of the king’s Scottish subjects was to create an integrated kingdom of Britain, whose emblem would be, in effect, the Scottish lion rampant, and whose Church would be established by reforming the English Church on Scottish lines” (Wormald 135). This viewpoint was essentially “brought briefly into the realm of practical politics” during the period of Covenanter (Wormald 137). Where Hume stood on the matter of the Covenant would provide a fascinating lens to further examine her translation of the *Trionfi*. Even without that information, however, the fact that she published the text during a period of civil unrest and civil war creates an implicit connection—whether that correlation can be fully understood yet or not—between her work and the unstable and mutable political, religious, and social landscape of Scotland at the time of her translation.

Analyzing Anna Hume’s *Triumphs*

In “Daughterly Desires: Representing and Reimagining the Feminine in Anna Hume’s *Triumphs*,” Sarah Dunnigan examines the ways in which Hume negotiates, within her translation and accompanying annotations, between her filial duties—both to her actual father and to Petrarch, the father of the *Trionfi*—and her own desires as a woman and author. Hume’s *Triumphs*, in Dunnigan’s judgement, reveal “complex relations of dependence and independence, ‘filial’ fidelity and disobedience,” that work together “to amplify Petrarch’s portrayal of the feminine and to justify [Hume’s] sensitivity to Woman’s representation”

(121). Such an act of negotiation between loyalty and dissent would be characteristic of translated works in the Renaissance, where a translator's "[l]oyalty or duty owed to the text which is the subject or source of translation is delicately balanced by the subtle processes of *reinterpretatio* which inevitably compel the creation of a new text, reimagined not only at linguistic and semantic levels but aesthetically and intellectually too" (Dunnigan 120–121).

Dunnigan's reading of Hume's translation, then, is apposite in that it portrays a dichotomy between the translation proper and the commentary, where the translation represents a "direct relationship with the 'fatherly' source-text" that "may be conceived as 'masculine', putatively authoritative and, of necessity, limited," while "[t]he commentary, marginal in both literal and symbolic senses, may accordingly be conceived as 'feminine' in its pre-eminent concerns with the representation of Laura and the figure of Woman, and by its dedicatory framework to the Princess Elisabeth" of Bohemia, grand-daughter of James VI and I (121). Dunnigan's reading of the *Triumphs* positions Hume as deftly negotiating between upholding "the suggestion that translation for Renaissance women entailed adoption of 'a relatively passive role'" and the "frequently rebarbative, audacious, and arguably 'proto-feminist'" nature of her paratext commentaries (121).

Dunnigan's reading creates a "nexus of female authorities" between Laura, Elisabeth and Hume, where "Laura awaits the poetic revelations of Hume who herself awaits the literary 'sentence' or judgement of Elisabeth. The superior *auctoritas* is ultimately not the memorialised Petrarch but Elisabeth to whom Hume symbolically presents herself as a loyal and deserving daughter" (130). Hume, then, "has no desire to contradict or challenge Petrarch's words" but yet still "manages to produce a defense of women, the creation of a miniature *querelle des femmes* text within the overall exegetical text" (Dunnigan 130). Hume's endeavor is to "persuade her new readership that the iconicity of Petrarch's beloved is decisively rooted in her intellectual and spiritual agency, and not the apparent orthodoxy of her passive beauty" (Dunnigan 128). However, this tender fascination with Laura does not simply emerge in a pattern of allusions to the symbolic and spiritual importance of the *Trionfi*'s feminine icon but reflects Hume's emotional and intellectual response to the Princess herself. Laura is commended to Elisabeth as a mirror of "wise wordes"; Elisabeth, in turn, is subsumed into the figure of Hume's patron so that praise of one becomes reflected praise of the other (Dunnigan 125). Dunnigan's reading of Hume's *Triumphs* is intimate and, in a sense, contained. Hume creates a defence of women, but she does so for the benefit of two specific women—Laura and Princess Elisabeth.

However, what happens when we read Hume's translation as not *just* establishing an intimate connection between herself, the character of Laura, and her dedicatee—the Princess Elisabeth of Bohemia—but *instead* between all Scottish women? Theo Van Heijnsbergen suggests in his analysis of Fowler's dedication to Queen Anne of his translation of the *Trionfi*, that "[u]sing a female dedicatee blurs the boundaries, and shortens the distance, between Petrarch's text and Scottish contemporary reference, shifting the context of the issues discussed in the source text to contemporary Scotland" (van Heijnsbergen 49). The same, then, could be argued regarding Hume's translation. Princess Elisabeth's mother—Elizabeth Stuart—was the daughter of Anne and James VI and I, which made Princess Elisabeth a Scottish woman by blood. Elisabeth was born in 1618, and "by the time she was just two years old, [her] father had been ousted as the King of Bohemia, implicated in the events that ignited one of the most catastrophic conflicts in European history, the Thirty Years' War, and driven into exile in the Hague. By 1621, [her father] had been stripped of the Palatinate and its hereditary title" (Jeffery, *Princess*, 2). Elisabeth's life was complicated and inundated with loss and feelings of alienation. It is possible that Hume saw in the Princess's early life a presage of the alienation that the Scottish people were undergoing as Covenant gave way to civil war.

Perhaps more importantly to Hume's requirements in a dedicatee, though, Elisabeth was devoutly Protestant, and brilliant and educated. She was a "dedicated scholar who took full advantage of the tutelage provided her at court" (Jeffery, *Princess*, 42). Growing up, Elisabeth "studied Latin, French, English and German, logic, mathematics, politics, philosophy and the sciences" and "relished any opportunity to perform surgical experiments and conduct dissections" (Jeffery, *Princess*, 42–43). Elisabeth's complete dedication to her studies and her devout faith, along with "the fact that her only serious suitor, King Ladislas of Poland was a Catholic ... drove her [to declare], at the age of [nineteen], that she would never marry but would devote herself instead to scholarship" (Jeffery, "Origins," 549). This, of course, "would not have been an easy or uncontroversial choice to make" since, as has been discussed, "the notion that women might speak publicly, even in the context of scholarly debate within an academic institution, was thought to violate expectations surrounding female chastity" (Jeffery, *Princess*, 49–50). Hume may have seen in Elisabeth a woman who put her faith—and thus, her soul and her chastity—above all, and grappled with the complexities and isolation that stemmed from that while still managing to achieve a rigorous, advanced education and position herself as a strong, intellectual woman.

These achievements arose in a milieu of female agency. Because Elizabeth Stuart “enjoyed presenting a sophisticated court at which the latest developments in philosophy, music, and the arts were discussed,” her daughter the Princess Elisabeth was able to create a nexus of intellectual women, including Anna Maria van Schurmann (“reputed to be the first woman to attend university in Europe”), Marie du Moulin, Dorothy Moore, Bathsua Makin, Katherine Jones (Lady Ranelagh), and Marie de Gournay (Jeffery, “Origins,” 549). “It was,” Jefferey states, “a network committed to debating current philosophical trends, exploring possible avenues for further study, and promoting the cause of women’s education” (Jeffery, “Origins,” 549).

The idea of Elisabeth and her constellation of scholarly women gathering together in a private location to further their intellectual pursuits conjures the image of Laura and her “glorious troupe!” of virtuous women battling against Cupid within the text proper (Hume 202, line 62). However, it also brings to mind the annotations written by Hume herself in which she essentially gathers the chaste women of the poem—women of the Bible, history, and literature—together in a single paratextual space, and, by and large, defends their choices and virtues. It is this act of bringing these literary women together and defending them, in her own words, that explicitly connects Hume’s translation to the tradition of the *querelle des femmes*. At its most simple, the *querelle des femmes* debated the four main problems of womanhood in an increasingly modern world: “the problem of chastity, the problem of power, the problem of speech, and the problem of knowledge” (King and Rabil xxiii). Alongside this, while defending women within the *querelle* discourse, “some women began to conceive of female communities [where] women not only might escape, if briefly, the subordinate position that life in the family entailed but might also make claims to power, exercise their capacity for speech, and display their knowledge” (King and Rabil xxiv). Hume’s dedicatory and concluding materials, along with her paratexts, and at times even the choices she makes within the translation proper, can be seen as both exploring the ‘four main problems’ of womanhood and as creating a ‘female community’—which can also be read as establishing a connection of lineage between Scottish women, Laura (and by extension Elisabeth), and the other chaste women named in the text—in order to create an enduring female literary culture. Arguably, Hume is constructing a feminine cultural tradition along the lines of national mythmaking, by which Scottish chroniclers had long asserted national distinctiveness through “legitimate descent from the ancient world” that bestowed “unmediated right of participation in European culture at large” (Parkinson 1). Hampered by the uncertainties of civil war, Hume never explicitly mentions Scotland in her text, nor does

she specify a connection between the women of the *Trionfi* and Scottish women. However, Hume's defence of the women of the *Trionfi*, when considered alongside the four 'problems' of womanhood that were central to the *querelle* debate, offers benefits for seventeenth-century Scottish women, who, by implication, are legitimate participants in the female lineage celebrated in Hume's text.

Sarah Dunnigan observes that "[o]ne can speculate about the degree to which Hume is indebted to earlier versions of *I Trionfi* (whether mediated through earlier French translations), to Fowler's which, as a Scottish exemplar, may have retained some cultural currency in Hume's circle, and to Sidney's which offers interesting, often similar, variants in the depiction of Laura" (122). Nevertheless, Hume goes out of her way to disavow such indebtedness. Instead of connecting her translation to those that came before—particularly Fowler's—Hume instead states that "all the three Triumphes were translated out of the Italian, a circumstance I considered not then, since it is thought necessary to say so much, I wil now say more. I never saw them, nor any part of them, in any other language but Italian, except the poore words in which I have cloathed them" (225). By doing this, Hume "isolates her translation in its unique relationship with the original, unlinking it from those that went before" (Petrina 175).

In this sense, Hume is distancing her version of Laura and "her troupe" from any previous mediation. Though she uses unnamed Italian commentators in her paratext where necessary, Hume mostly privileges her own explicatory notes as she explains historical or literary references or provides defences for specific women. Occasionally this even includes witty repudiation of the (presumably male) Italian Commentators that she draws on. This can be seen in the notes of chapter two of the *Triumph of Death* where Hume states that "The Italian Commentary makes a long and needlesse discourse ... as if all did not know that those who dreame they see a dead person appeare, as if alive, doe ordinarily make such a doubt in their sleepe" (Hume p. 224). By centring her own experience and interpretation—her own knowledge and her own voice—through her annotations, and occasionally placing her voice above the male voices that came before her, Hume is implicitly responding to two of the four 'problems' of womanhood: the problems of speech and of knowledge. Though women were meant to have some level of education in post-Reformation Scotland, the act of privileging one's own opinion or interpretation—one's own voice—as a woman would still have been seen as radical within most circles.

Alongside this, Hume's annotations read not just as a personal display of intelligence and education, but as an education for others, as if Hume is providing her readers—whom she

acknowledges as existing outside simply the Princess Elisabeth in both third prefatory dedication and her concluding note—with a lesson on famous women who, in many cases, acted with agency and wisdom while maintaining their chastity. Hume alludes to these women with what feels like an intimate knowledge of their history and situation. Though there are many, a good example of this within the paratexts is the “vestal Nunne” Tucia, who, Hume explains in her annotations, “cleared her selfe from a false accusation, by carrying water in a sive” (p. 205, line 130; p. 208). Much as Christine de Pisan’s fifteenth-century *Book of the City of Ladies* had claimed “the universality rather than the exceptionalism of female virtue” (King 224), Hume’s paratexts show her readers the innumerable but consistent and characteristic ways that women have displayed both wisdom and knowledge, alongside chastity, throughout history.

This emphasis on virtuous self-justification seen in the previous example of Tucia makes particular sense in Hume’s setting: in reformed Scotland, women were considered, for the first time, to be responsible for their own souls (Larner 101). However, the Protestant religion was also inherently—and tremendously—patriarchal. As such, women’s interactions with the Kirk during the sixteenth- and- seventeenth- centuries are characterized by a “struggle and negotiation for control over women’s bodies, their dignity, and their performances of gender and sexuality” (Glaze 126). Hume’s translation and paratexts, then, could be interpreted as acting as a response to the ‘problem of chastity’ within both the *querelle* and, more generally, within post-Reformation Scottish society. Highlighting the chastity of numerous women—who demonstrate that chastity in diverse ways—could be seen to act as gathering an assemblage of role models for Scottish women who were expected to negotiate the complex relationship between their increased personal spiritual responsibility and the patriarchal society they lived in. This suggests that Hume’s translation and annotations provided space for a community of women and provided them with examples of virtuous, chaste, women who *also* were educated, powerful, and strong—and none more so than Laura herself.

Hume’s interest in, translation of, and commentary on Laura—and particularly Laura’s strength and virtue—repays consideration in the light of a distinctive representation in medieval and early modern Scottish chronicles of “the complex issue of female heroism when it was displayed in the masculine world of warfare” (Ewan 4). In the *Triumphs*, Laura—the object of desire for the male speaker—represents an ‘unlikely’ person to defend the lovers and defeat Cupid. Though she is described as conquering the god of love with her “True Chastitie, and rarest beauty” (Hume 203, line 73), the imagery used within the *Triumph*

of *Chastity* is described with incredibly physical terms. We can see this in the text proper in way that Laura is described as using her “vertuous hand” to “quickly quench’t those guiled fiery darts”—Cupid’s arrows (Hume 202, lines 54–55). The comparison of Laura’s bravery to physical, war-like, action is prevalent throughout this section of the *Triumphs* and naturally allows for a discussion of the ‘problem of power’ that existed within the *querelle* debate. As such, it becomes increasingly clear why the *Triumphs* were seen as “an invitation to female poetics” (qtd. In Clarke 283).

The connection between Laura, virtue, and physical power is further elaborated on in a comparison between Laura and the Amazons, whose power is described as less than Laura’s own: “Neither *Camilla*, nor the warre-like hoast, / That cut their breasts, could so much valour boast” (Hume 202, lines 57–60). In most cases, associating a woman with the Amazons would be perceived negatively, as “[a]ny woman who excelled was likely to be called an Amazon, recalling the self-mutilated warrior women of antiquity who repudiated all men, gave up their sons, and raised only their daughters” (King and Rabil xxv). This is likely because “[e]xcellence in a woman was perceived as a claim for power, and power was reserved for the masculine realm. A woman who possessed either one was masculinized and lost title to her own female identity” (King and Rabil xxv). However, even though Laura is described as being more powerful than even the Amazons, her strength and skills are not repudiated but instead respected throughout both the text proper and Hume’s paratexts, and her femininity and womanhood are never questioned. While in the text proper this is likely because it is Laura’s chastity that is her true weapon, it nevertheless seems impossible to read these scenes without envisioning physical action. This is complicated, for while the imagery conjures “masculine attributes of military prowess, knightly accomplishments, and honourable devotion to king and country ... attributes traditionally associated with men” (Ewan 4) it is describing the transformative and overwhelming powers of female virtue—something which would, traditionally be expressed through chaste, silent obedience.

As Elizabeth Ewan argues, a woman who performed, or was thought to have performed, these physical acts of heroism “could pose a danger to a social order which enforced strict gender roles” (4). Hume had a particularly difficult task in representing female heroism, considering her work was a translation and as such “depend[ed] on allegiance or loyalty to the ‘fatherly’ text” (Dunnigan 121). Laura is chaste and obedient in the text proper, of course, but her agency and determination to action—which inspired defences of woman rulers in the era of Mary Stuart and Elizabeth I—would have been harder to contain. Where Hume *could* have stressed a more appropriate—obedient, quieter— example of femininity,

however, was in her paratexts. Yet, in her commentary on the *Triumph of Chastity*, Hume engages directly with the *querelle des femmes* and describes women as having agency and as taking steps of physical action, and she generally commends them for it. She acknowledges that Hirsilia,

Wife to *Romulus*, shee with the other Romane wives, all Sabine women, who had been stollen from their kindred, seeing their husbands ready to fight with their fathers, brothers, cousins, &c. ranne in betwixt them, and opposing themselves to the naked swords, staid the fury of the fight, brought them to a parley, and so to an agreement (208).

Hume also highlights the actions of Dido, who “burned her selfe in her husbands funerall pile, lest she should bee compelled to marry an importunate suiter, or bring warre on her Countrey” (Hume 207).

Women acting with agency is, in a sense, an inherent part of the *Trionfi*; if it was not there, Hume could not have included it. However, by privileging—within her annotations—the ability for a chaste woman to use physical agency in defence of her people or her beliefs, Hume created a connection between her translation of the *Trionfi* and the negotiation between the contemporary Scottish issues of female agency and responsibility, and expectations of femininity and obedience. In doing so, Hume’s work becomes a part of the *querelle* tradition, and her ‘troup’ of chaste women becomes a welcoming space for actual Scottish women to gather and learn. Under the Reformation’s intensified survey and expectations, Scottish womanhood had an inherently complex, even contradictory, existence. Hume’s translation needs to be read in juxtaposition to the incongruencies of women’s experiences in early modern Scotland.

Conclusion

In her translation and paratexts, by privileging of the agency, wisdom, and chastity of Laura and her ‘troup’, Hume exposes the complexities of existing as a woman in early modern Europe, and above all in reformed Scotland. Hume creates an extended *querelle des femmes* conversation, in order to assert that women can be intellectual, act with agency, and maintain their ‘ideal womanhood’—their faith and chastity. But by showing this, her work exposes how women actually existing in Scotland—and, indeed, in the wider world—were not given those same opportunities or understanding. In her second dedication to the Princess Elisabeth, Hume states that her intention is to take Laura “From the dark Cloyster” (Hume 159, line 20). Though there is a natural connection to religion in the term cloister, its most general

description is “[a]n enclosed place or space” (*OED*, “cloister,” n.1). When looked at alongside this definition, Hume’s translation of the *Triumphs* could be seen as bringing the women of Scotland out of the cloistered precincts in which their lives were still confined, by privileging their voices, their wisdom, and their agency and, in doing so, creating a “countervailing image of historic female power” that exposes the way that women in Scotland were inherently assumed to have none (Kelly 28).

Hume’s translation of the *Trionfi* has established itself as a complex piece of literature, deserving of more scholarly attention than it has so far received. As Dunnigan notes,

Hume reads and recreates Petrarch as a literary daughter who is loyal but seeks to illuminate further the philosophical and spiritual significance of the Petrarchan feminine. Hume can be placed in a tradition of dissenting and imaginative female readers which begins with Christine de Pisan and the debates of the *querelle de rose* and *querelle des femmes*. Hume’s translation of the feminine, however, is ultimately sanctioned by the further cultural and historical ‘translations’ which she obtains for her book by gifting it to the Princess Palatinate (132).

However, Hume also imagines a wider readership than just the Princess Palatinate for her translation. She speaks to that readership twice, and in her second address to them she states that she is more than willing to “bestow some of my few leasure hours on turning the other three *Triumphs*, of *Fame*, *Time*, and *Divinitie* or *Heaven*” (Hume 225). Her understanding of, and desire for, this expanded circle of readers allows for the possibility that her text was meant to represent more than just the intimate connection between Elisabeth and Laura. The two reflect each other, yes, but so too are they a reflection of the experience of Scottish women more generally. It is impossible, of course, to determine what Hume *intended* to say with her translation of the *Trionfi*. What her work *does*, however, is provide a wholly female literary space in which to discuss the complexities and incongruencies of early modern Scottish womanhood.

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